

AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

OF

6,

AMERICAN SLAVERY.

[THE apologists of Southern slavery are accustomed to brand every picture of slavery and its fruits as exaggeration or calumny.—The FACTS stated in these sheets are capable of satisfactory and legal proof. In cases where, from personal considerations, the names of persons or places are suppressed, the circumstances and authority on which they rest will be fully made known, on application at the office of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, No. 46 Washington Street, Boston.]

AGED SLAVES.

No one can examine the subject of slavery, without being often led to reflect on the probable suffering of aged slaves. If it be unwise for infirm parents to become entirely dependent on the generosity of their own children, what can we reasonably expect of human nature, intrusted with despotic power over a poor, despised slave, too feeble to labor, and too old to bring any thing in the market? Will money or care be expended on the worn out human *machine*, when it can no longer be kept in such repair as to prove profitable to the owners? An ordinary knowledge of human nature, and the most authentic accounts of slavery, alike prove that slaves generally have little to rely upon, when they cease to administer to the luxury or convenience of their masters.

The following narrative is from an excellent lady in Portland, a member of the Society of Friends.

"The aged slave to whom you refer, I saw when I was in St. Augustine. She was in an old building by the

water's side, as bleak a spot as there was in the place; and the air had free ingress through the broken window. She had not a single article of clothing, except an old frock coat, of thin cloth, which some gentleman had given her. It was January; and though the climate there is comparatively mild, yet we could not dispense with a fire in our room. Her bed (which was but an apology for one) was so filthy, that it required some resolution to approach it. She used to mourn because she could not keep things more tidy. She would say, 'Missa, the dirt makes me sick; but I can't help it.'

"One half of her body was entirely palsied. She could not help herself in the least, or even move without assistance. She was wholly dependent on the other slaves; and they were so occupied, they seldom found time to attend to her. She said she often went all day without food. When I spoke to her mistress about her, she replied, 'I can't do every thing. I told the servants to see to her, and I thought they did. Judy has been my best servant; she always kept the kitchen so neat.' I thought to myself that her faithfulness met but a poor reward.

"One night, it being colder than usual, I went to carry Judy an extra covering. It was nearly twelve o'clock; and what was my surprise to see the poor creature sitting on the block she had occupied all day, shivering, and in great pain! As soon as she saw me, she exclaimed, 'Oh, missa, I so glad you come! They have all gone and forgot me, and I thought I should have to sit here all night.'

"I went and woke one of the slaves to assist me. She was probably fatigued, and felt rather cross at being disturbed; for she seized Judy roughly by the arm, and dragged her to the bed, saying, 'It is a pity she wouldn't die!'

"I shall never forget that night, or the poor creature's reply: 'Every day I pray that it may be God's will to take me.'

"When we were about leaving St. Augustine, Judy said, 'And won't you never come again? What shall I do when you are gone?'

"My aunt tried to console her, by telling her she had interested friends in her behalf, and had left some money

with them to be appropriated to her use. But poor Judy could not be comforted. I have often wished I could hear from her; but I suppose she is, ere this, released from all her troubles."

"P. S. If any one doubts these facts, my aunt, as well as myself, will vouch for their authenticity. One of our neighbors, who resided some time at the South, related to me the following incident, last evening. If it should be called in question, he is willing to give his name.

"Mr. Ezekiel Dawes, a respectable merchant in Richmond, gave his female slave permission to make a wedding, and invite her friends. He neglected to see that a white person was present, as the laws of Virginia require; and when all were assembled, and were enjoying a little innocent merriment, the police officers rushed in, seized the whole company, and thrust them promiscuously into the cage.* In the morning, they were all taken out, and received a certain number of lashes. The owner of the bride endeavored, by paying a fine, to save her from the whipping; but he could not."

SLAVES NOT PROTECTED BY THE LAWS.

WHOEVER has read southern law books, or has any means of becoming well acquainted with the administration of what is called justice in slave-holding States, will become convinced that slaves have no real efficient protection from the laws.

Not long ago, a young female slave, about eleven years old, belonging to Miss L.[†] of Charleston, South Carolina,

* The cage, is a prison with strong gratings, prepared for the reception of any slave taken up in the night time. The law requiring at least one white person to be present at all assemblies of colored people, is a precaution against insurrections. Such laws can only be made necessary by an unnatural system, which unavoidably arrays the interests and prejudices of one portion of the community against the other.

[†] Her name is at the Anti-Slavery Office, No. 46 Washington Street, Boston.

was whipped to death. The report was soon spread in the neighborhood ; and Mr. Webb and Mr. Ladson, gentlemen of undoubted integrity and humanity, (though brought up to think slavery no sin,) resolved to inquire into the circumstances. They waited upon Miss L., who is a highly accomplished woman, belonging to a literary and distinguished family ; but they found her exceedingly reluctant to allow any investigation. The gentlemen, however, insisted upon it, notwithstanding the lady evidently regarded it as an impertinent interference.

The body of the unfortunate child was dug up and examined ; and marks of violence were discovered, which left no doubt of the truth of the report. Whether Miss L. *authorized* such severe whipping is unknown ; for the honor of humanity it is to be hoped that she did not. But admitting every possible palliation for the lady, what do you think of a *system*, which places children in the power of brutal overseers ? if the father and mother of that little murdered slave *knew* their child was killed by violence—nay, if they *witnessed* it with their own eyes—they could not bring an action against the murderers, or even be allowed to testify to what they saw. What do you think of laws like these in a free republic ?

The southern lady, (herself a slave-owner,) who told the above anecdote, added, “The overseer ran away, when he heard the body of the child had been examined ; and it was lucky he did ; for if he had remained there, he would have had a good *sum of money* to pay !”

THE INFLUENCE OF SLAVERY WITH REGARD TO MORAL PURITY.

A PROMINENT feature in the system of slavery is the bluntness of moral feelings, and the dimness of moral perception inevitably induced by it. Even conscientious men and women often find it difficult, and apparently impossible, to apply to this subject the most universal rules of justice, and the most common maxims of humanity. This great evil originates in a fixed habit of not

regarding the colored race as brethren and sisters of the human family. Our knowledge of the Africans is coeval with the practise of enslaving them ; and slavery, so long as it exists, *must* be supported by laws and customs that recognize human beings as articles of property ; the unavoidable consequence is, that slaves are universally considered by their owners as mere animals, or pieces of machinery.

The moral influence produced by such a state of things, was strikingly exemplified in a conversation that took place at the house of a Boston lady, intimately known to the writer. Miss G.* of South Carolina, had been invited to meet several ladies at the house referred to. The conversation turned on that never-failing topic, the difficulty of procuring good domestics. One of the guests remarked, " You are not troubled with these kind of difficulties at the South, Miss G. ; but I should think you would find it very unpleasant to be surrounded by so many negroes." " Not at all unpleasant," replied the southern lady, " I have always been accustomed to the blacks, and I really like them. When I was an infant, I was nursed by a black woman ; and I have always had them to attend upon me. I assure you that many of them are very far from being disagreeable in their personal appearance. I had a young slave, who was, without exception, the prettiest creature I ever saw. She used to tend table for us, and almost always attracted the attention of visitors. A gentleman, who was often at our house, became dreadfully in love with her, and tried to make her accept handsome presents.

" One day she came to me, and asked me to speak to that gentleman, and forbid his saying any thing more to her ; for he troubled her very much, and she could not get rid of him, though she constantly refused to listen to him. I promised to speak to the gentleman about it ; and I did so, telling him that his attentions were very unpleasant to my slave, and begged him to refrain from offering them in future. For a few weeks he desisted ; but at the end of that time, he came to me and said, ' Miss G., I must have that girl ! I cannot live without

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her!' He offered me a very high price. *I pitied the poor fellow, and so I sold her to him.*"

Miss G. was an unmarried woman, between twenty and thirty years old. She would have considered herself insulted, if any one had doubted her modesty and sense of propriety. Yet she told this story with perfect unconsciousness that there was any thing disgusting or shocking, or even wrong, in one woman's trafficking away another, under such circumstances! That such a thing could be *done* in a free and Christian community, is sufficiently strange; but that it could be *told of* without the *least shame*, or the slightest consciousness that it *ought* to excite shame, is still more extraordinary.

What a comment is this upon the *moral sense* of slaveholding communities!

Miss G. would have been horror-struck at the idea of selling into prostitution even the poorest and most degraded white woman; but the colored race she had been always taught to consider as mere animals.

Oh! who can count the unnumbered crimes, the manifold impurities, inevitably growing out of a system, which constantly seeks to protect itself, by regarding immortal beings as the brutes that perish!

It was often practiced by rich persons in Gloucester, Massachusetts, owning slaves, to give away the infants newly born, among the humbler classes. My mother has often told me of one woman, well esteemed, who weaned her own child, on the reception of such a present, and reared with her own milk, and tended in her own arms, night and day, the little black bantling. The child was reared with affection, and dressed and fed as well as her own children, until she was five years old. At this time the woman had an unconquerable desire to purchase a brocade gown. Her husband was not able to give it to her, and she knew not how to earn it. Her husband was going to Virginia for corn, and she consented that he should take her black child, that she had nursed at her own breast, and sell her to strangers, in a far country, where she never could hope again to see her; and devoted

the proceeds of this adventure, to purchasing this superfluous garment. She probably kept this dress for the Sabbath, to worship God in—with what inward adornness of the mind, the reader must judge.

ISABELLA was a young black girl, who came here a few years since from a slave State, with her mistress and her infant. Passing from the packet, at New York, to the wharf, the plank slipped, and the girl, with the infant, fell into the water. She had sufficient presence of mind to hold the child above the waves until some one came to her assistance. She was much praised at the time; and her mistress told me she owed the child to her care. Her mistress was brought up in New England, and, until her marriage, had appeared amiable; but I often heard of scenes of noise and passion between the young mistress and her young slave—sometimes sufficiently loud to be heard below. The reason was, she had been a resident among slaves, and she was altered. Her child sickened and died; the slave tended her with affection, and the day after the funeral, her mistress made her a present in money, as a reward. I went to pay the visit of condolence, and the mourning mother told me Isabella had offended her that morning, and that she obliged her to return this money to punish her. I pondered the proceeding at the time; there seemed little tenderness, no justice, in thus wresting a present thus bestowed. I have since learned that slaves can hold no property, and this satisfied me. Isabella's mistress died, and after the funeral she came to me in distress, for fear her young master would oblige her to return to a slave country. She showed me her back, which was ploughed with the scars of the whip. On one occasion she told me her master ordered her 99 lashes for neglecting to shut the piano at night! Her hands were cut and cross-cut with scars. She told me those were scars of wounds received from her master's dagger. She declared she would never return alive. If they forced her on board a vessel she would jump overboard and be drowned, rather than again be a slave. There was then no anti-slavery society. I con-

sulted four or five lawyers whether her master could oblige her to return, she having been brought here. They all gave their opinion that she was his property, and our laws would give her up; and that there was a fine of \$500 on any one who should secrete her.* One lawyer was willing to retain her on a writ of habeas corpus. The late Mr. George Hunt, showed a laudable compassion for this poor young creature. He consulted his friend Mr. S., and I believe he differed from the other lawyers, (among whom was a judge,) and thought she might be retained. The colored people to whom I appealed, were timid, and refused to secrete her. While my sister and myself were busying ourselves to aid her, we heard she had made her escape to one of the British colonies. What became of her I have never learned.

PHILLIS'S WEDDING.

PHILLIS was bought when quite a child, (this was in the olden time, when we held slaves,) by a distant relative of mine, who lived on a farm. She was called rich in those days, had money at interest, and rode in her chair. The good woman never dreamed it was a crime to trade in flesh and blood, but thought, no doubt, she was well doing when she gave a hundred silver dollars for this black girl, in the hope that she should rear her up to assist in the care of her aged mother. Mrs. B. practised a thousand virtues; and had she lived in these days, she would have been as zealous as Hannah More, or Mrs. Child, in the anti-slavery cause. There was no law existing against teaching blacks at that time, and there was no law needed; for few had common school learning among the whites, especially in small towns and villages. Mrs. B. never thought of teaching Phillis to read; but she always called her to be present at prayers—made her go to meeting, and had her catechised. Phillis was clad in coarse

* This opinion was founded on mistake. Any slave brought or sent to a free State *by his master or mistress*, can claim and take his or her freedom.

raiment, but she was kept tidy and warm; she labored in the barn, and in the garden, and the field, and she could be rarely spared from this arduous toil for domestic duties. Phillis was handsome, and she sang delightfully. A neighboring farmer waited on Mrs. B., and asked the hand of Phillis for his slave, who had declared an affection for her. The consent being given, Phillis was allowed to receive an occasional visit from her lover, and in due time it was arranged by the farmer and Mrs. B., that, on such a day, the black pair should be married. It never occurred to Mrs. B. that there could be any appeal by her slave to her decision. Phillis was not consulted about receiving a lover, or a husband; it was never supposed she was to have a preference, other than her mistress directed. On the day appointed for the wedding, Mrs. B. sent six miles for the minister to perform the service. She invited the farmer's family to be present, and provided for their entertainment. Phillis went quietly to toil in the field as usual, and as usual returned to dinner. After she had taken her frugal meal, alone, apart from the family, her kind mistress, for she was kind, told her she had better take her hoe and return to her work, and finish hoeing the field of potatoes. You need not be in a hurry to return, Phillis, I will send for you in time for you to put on your Sunday gown, and you must think, Phillis, said the pious matron, of the sacred vow you are going to take this evening. The slave obeyed—returned after a day passed in hard toil, when her mistress sent for her, and by her order, put on her Sunday gown, and shoes and stockings—never worn in mild weather by her except on the Sabbath. When the company were assembled in the parlor, and the minister was ready, the two slaves were called in and were married. The farmer had taken the liberty of bringing two other slaves with him. These with the young couple, were ordered into the kitchen as soon as the ceremony was over, and Phillis was ordered to proceed and arrange the supper for the guests. There was feasting, but it was in a solemn puritanical way. Phillis, her husband, and their two guests, had wherewith to eat, but it was given out to them—not to make merry with, but to sustain them. There were no presents, no congratulations, for the young couple. And this is a picture of slavery in its mildest form—in New England—

among professing Christians—among those who willingly broke the chain from the neck of the slave, when taught it was a crime to hold him in bonds.

The following story was told me by Miss L. of Philadelphia. She said she knew it to be true. Mrs. Hollingsworth lived in one of the small slave-holding Atlantic States. She was to appearance sensitive and delicate, with a slender frame and feeble health. She had a husband and family—gave feasts—dashed at the Springs, &c. &c. Her cook was a black slave. One day that she had many guests, she was displeased with the preparation of one of the dishes on the table. After the dinner, she repaired to the kitchen, and rebuked the cook, who further exasperated her mistress by attempting to exculpate herself. The mistress in a fury seized the hearth shovel, and with the flat part of it beat the head of the poor slave until she killed her. There was no notice taken of this crime by government.

These stories all go to prove the deleterious effect of slavery upon the slave-holder. A person must be in ignorance, or their minds and hearts must be perverted, before they would risk the danger, to their own character, of such forbidden possessions.

THE EFFECT OF KINDNESS UPON THE BLACK MAN.

COL. MIDDLETON was not a very good specimen of the colored man. He was an old horse-breaker, who owned a house that he inhabited at the head of Belknap street. He was greatly respected by his own people, and his house was thronged with company. His morals were questioned—he was passionate, intemperate, and profane.

We lived opposite to him for five years; during all this time my father treated this old negro with uniform kindness. He had a natural compassion for the ignorant and the oppressed, and I never knew him fail to lift his hat to this old neighbor, and audibly say, with much suavity, "How do you do, Col. Middleton," or "Good morning, colonel." My father would listen to the dissonant sounds that came from an old violin that the colonel played on every summer's evening, and was greatly amused at his power in subduing mettlesome colts. He would walk over and compliment the colonel on his skill, in his hazardous employment, and the colonel would, when thus praised, urge the untamed animal to some fearful caper, to show off his own bold daring. Our negroes, for many years, were allowed peaceably to celebrate the abolition of the slave trade; but it became a frolic with the white boys, to deride them on this day, and finally they determined to drive them, on these occasions, from the common. The colored people became greatly incensed by this mockery of their festival, and this infringement of their liberty, and a rumor reached us on one of these anniversaries, that they were determined to resist the whites, and were going armed with this intention. About three o'clock in the afternoon, a shout of a beginning fray reached us. Soon, terrified children and women ran down Belknap street, pursued by white boys, who enjoyed their fright. The sound of battle approached; clubs and brickbats were flying in all directions. At this crisis Col. Middleton opened his door, armed with a loaded musket, and in a loud voice, shreaked death to the first white who should approach. Hundreds of human beings, white and black, were pouring down the street, the blacks making but a feeble resistance, the odds in numbers and spirit being against them. Col. Middleton's voice could be heard above every other, urging his party to turn and resist to the last. His appearance was terrific, his musket was levelled, ready to sacrifice the first white man that came within its range. The colored party, shamed by his reproaches, and fired by his example, rallied, and made a short show of resistance. Capt. Winslow Lewis, and my father, determined to try and quell this tumult. Captain Lewis valiantly grappled with the ringleaders of the whites, and my father coolly surveyed the scene from

his own door, and instantly determined what to do. He calmly approached Col. Middleton, who called to him to stop or he was a dead man! I can see my father at this distance of time, and never can forget the feelings his family expressed, as they saw him still approach this infuriated armed man. He put aside the musket, and with his countenance all serenity, said a few soothing words to the colonel, who burst into tears, put up his musket, and with great emotion, exclaimed loud enough for us to hear across the street, "I will do it for you, for you have always been kind to me," and retired into his own house, and shut his door upon the scene.

A LEAF FROM MY JOURNAL.

Dec. 21, 1833. We dined at Salem, a Moravian settlement, in Stokes county, North Carolina, and were waited upon at table by Adam, one of the innkeeper's slaves, an active, middle-aged man, of good appearance and ready conversation. He informed us that he was married, and had two children; and that his wife having been the slave of one Freeze, a Moravian of that place, was sold by her master eleven weeks before, to a man living 150 miles to the south, for \$250, and this too without any provocation on her part.

This narrative, which was told in an artless manner, made a deep impression on my mind, and for miles I thought only of the wrongs done to this unoffending pair. Edith is now sold away from the husband and children, and carried to such a distance from them, as forbids all hope that they will ever see each other more. Thus is a wife and mother bereaved, by arbitrary power, of every thing which a wife and mother holds most dear. Helpless woman! hard is thy lot, and that inflicted by the hand of a professed disciple of Christ, in the 19th century. What mockery! what daring presumption is it to call one's self by the name of the blessed Jesus, while living unrepentant of this most flagrant outrage of his peculiar law—the *Law of Love!*